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Scmarthy Jane

at the

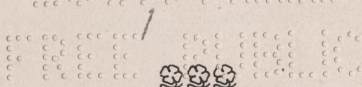
Opening

of the

Brown Hotel



Scmarthy Jane
at the
Opening
of the
Brown Hotel



By Elizabeth Johnson

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Dedicated to my Rheumatism
which gave me time
to think.

ALIVE!!
DURING 1997
YEAR!!

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PART I.

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OPENING OF THE BROWN HOTEL



Attended by Scmarthy Jane
and Her Country Cousin.



“Well”, of all the magnificentest things you ever seen in your born days, that Brown Hotel is it. It’s jest marvelously and magically arranged. Nobody but Miss Brown could have thought it all out. Why the whole inside of hit is made of white marble and ferns, ’cept the carpets, cheers, sofaies and window curtains, candiliers, china dishes, cut-up-glass-ware and sech like, and grandmaw’s feather bed is jes nothin compared to them little carpets on the floor for softness. They jes rise up under your feet. They have a little yeast in them, I guess. Bein as they are oriental. And the wonderfulist sealin’ over head you ever seen. Hit’s a—l—l hand carved—and you will jest have to see them bed rooms, to analyze how beautiful they air. But you’ll have to engage mor’n one room, if

you staid long—'cause you don't get to bathe but one time, if you jest have one room. Cause hit wuz writ out in plain figers an pasted on the outside of the wall

700 rooms,

700 baths.

“Miss Brown made one of her biggest boys stand on the stair steps, and jest dared anybody to pass him. He didn't look like a chap you'd want to argue with, and I wasn't sich a sky-blue idiot as to try to git by him, 'cause I jest imagined there was a baby asleep in one of them rooms up stairs and it wuz jes natural, Miss Brown wouldn't want hit waked up when there wuz so much company around.

“I wuz thankful we could git ourselves elevated upstairs. Me and Scomarthy jes stood still, and wuz there before we knewed it. Now to go in one of them bed rooms, you'd think you wuz in somebody's best setin room. Not a bed to be seen nowhere's, and you walk up to the wall (anywheres) and pull out a bed, and feel the silliest. By this time I wuz so overcome with the georgiousness of the whole arrangement, that I felt as weak as dish-water, so I leant against the wall and shut my eyes and rested, while Scomarthy Jane went to look at the kitchen.

“Now! she didn't tell me, but I jes' knewed from her looks, that hit wuz arranged on the

same plan as them bed-rooms that you jest walked up to the wall (anywheres) and pulled out a stove. I'll tell you science sho has advanced in the finishin' up of the Brown Hotel.

“Now! listen, don't you say a word about this, 'cause I don't want to 'pere meddlesome, or ignorant, but if Miss Brown's going to keep all them niggers in the dining room in white cloths, her laundry will sho be sumpen. And do you know there wuz a man setin there by a table jest heaped up with folded birthday cards and wuz lettin anybody get one that wanted one, and I wanted one. And what do you think, ever last thing they had to eat wuz printed on them cards. Now! what about publishen what you've got to eat like that. I know Miss Brown wuz jest horrified to death about it, for I think everybody in Louisville wuz there or a comin' and there wuzn't half enough to feed the crowd.

“Scmarthy Jane jest would see the ballroom, so I went along, and it sho is elegant. The candeliers have white glass yearbobs dangling all around the bottom of 'em, and little gold cheers with calico cushions settin in a row against the wall, nice and handy for the boys to set down and rest when they got tired of playin' ball.

“I don't know how many boys Miss Brown's got. But I seen several standing around dressed in uniforms, a good idee to save washin'. There

wuz a cute little fellow, jes base-ball size, all dressed in red. Miss Brown sho makes her children behave nice when there's company. I hope Mr. Brown invites us back sometime when they are goin' to play ball. I'd like to see a good game in that room. Well! it sho is one swell place. Miss Brown's got a miracle worker on the job, and he went over the top and took the job with him. I'll say he did."



PART II.

Getting Ready for the Dance.

"We're goin', we're goin'!" squealed Scmarthy. "Sakes alive! where to?" I ased. "Why, to the "dinner dance" at the Brown Hotel". "Jeeminy Crickette, you don't say so?" "But I do say so", says Scmarthy Jane, "for here are the invitations." We will take a room at the hotel for the nite." "But Scmarthy, I haven't a single thing appropriated to wear." "Oh! you'll wear some of my things. Everybody goes in full evening dress to that sort of a thing." "Now Scmarthy, I don't like the way you are a talkin'. I never did went any where without wearing a full dress of some sort." "Heaven save us!" said Scmarthy, and she went to her room. She came back with a box in her hands. "Here, you may wear this," and she shoved the suit box at me. "Now go to your room and take a nap. That's what I am going to do. I want to feel fresh for to-nite. And she went down the hall whistling.

* * * * *

"I wuz too curious to see jest how that dress wuz goin' to look on me, to think about naps. I knewed I'd feel fresh, if the dress wuz fresh. My! how perfectly splendiferous, moonburst

chifon over apple blossom taffeta, I think that's what Scmarthy said hit wuz. And little shiny shoes. I put them on first. Then I took that lovely dress outen the box to put on next. And sakes alive!—there wuz nothin' there but the skirt. I knewed that Scmarthy was sound asleep by this time, but I jest couldn't wait, for I wanted the rest of that dress. I slipped down the hall and knocked timerously on the door. I knocked two or three times before I waked her up. Then Scmarthy poked her head outen the door, lookin' for all the world like one of them Golddust Twins, and axed if the house wuz on fire. "No! indeed" says I, "somepen worsen that. The upper part of the dress that you lent me the lower part of, ain't there. I hate like smoke to pester you, bein' as you air a sleep. But I want the waist to that skirt." Scmarthy looked jes like she did when Dr. Hale told her there wuz no hopes for her first husband who died of heart failure. She jes set down hard in a cheer and prolapsed. "There aint no rest", she said, that's all there is to it."

"But, Scmarthy!" and I looked at her in whole-sale astonishment, "You shooly don't call that skirt a f-u-l-l dress."

"But she wuz slammin' the door shut in a fury. Well, well, I didn't mean to get sich a rise outen her. She's got a terrible temper and

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jes' biles over and scalds anything near her when she gets mad. She's alright when she don't have her temper and is rale smart. She has had every disadvantage. Why she's been educated four or five times.

"I had orters to go up town and get a few little things any way. And maybe I could find a waist to match that skirt. I am goin' to Kresge's, Grant's and Woolworth's to get some hoseries, handkerchefs and hairpins. And I hope I can find a waist to wear with that skirt that won't spile its color skeme, and if I jes' can't get a waist nowhere, I'll borry Scmarthy Jane's ma sweater, for I sholy mean to go full dressed.



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PART III.

The Dinner Dance.

“Scmarthy packed a sporty-lookin’ black bag with her belongins, whilst I packed the old hair trunk that belonged to my greatest aunt. ‘Now’, says I to Scmarthy, ‘you select your room wheresoever you please to. But I am goin’ to take mine somewheres in the fifteenth story’”. “Land alive, what are you doin’ that for”? says she. “Well, jes cause’ and for this reason, I seen in the news paper where the main trunk line wuz placed in the attic and I want my trunk to set in the main line, if it is an old hair trunk, and I want to situate myself convenient to my belongins”. “Well, I shall take a room with the Murphy beds,” said Scmarthy.

“Well, Scmarthy, if it’s jest the same to you, I’ll set in your room until after lunch”, but I could see she wuz jest on pins for me to go—and I knewed why. Scmarthy does all sorts of things to her face when there’s nobody around. As we went in the dining room, she giggled and said, “You jest watch me, and do, as I do”.

“And we set down to a plum bare table with nothin’ on it at tall. Scmarthy picked up the church calendar by her plate and thought she would entertain herself seein’ who wuz going

to preach, and I picked up mine, but I couldn't get no sorter satisfacion outen it.

"Then a rale nice, polite-lookin' waiter wanted to know what I wished, and I said I wished for jest what Scmarthy wished for, if she had wished. Scmarthy Jane snickered, but I felt plum dignified I'd put Scmarthy right where she belonged. She wuz always tryin' to run things over me.

* * * * *

"It's the unusualest thing in the world for Scmarthy to change her mind when once she gets her head set, and she jest insisted, till I brung that skirt down and dressed in her room. "Oh! just let me touch you up", said she' so you won't look so much like a country "Hoosier." "But Scmarthy, I aint usein to it, and I feel heathenish enough with jest this skirt on, without you paintin' me up like er 'Injun'".

"I really am ashamed to go. I couldn't make folks with *good* imaginations believe that these little pieces of lace wuz a waist."

"I am sholy glad I've got these here green glass year bobs. I feel as if they air the only things I have on above the waist-line. I don't look fitten to be seen, and I won't believe that this skirt is a full dress until I've seen what the other folks have on."

“No! didn’t know the new dances.

“No! didn’t keer to try any old ones.

“No! didn’t want any refreshments.”

“No! didn’t keer to set still.” Oh! that wusn’t what I had meant to say, but before I knewed it, a hand wuz under my arm and I wuz goin’ with the crowd. Wuz this a whirl wind, and wuz I goin’ to be taken like Elijha wuz? I wuz beginning to feel so queer. Won’t you please find Semarthy for me, I’m rale indisposed?”—“Why, what on earth”—said Semarthy, “go right in my room and rest. What happened to you anyway?” “Nothin’, not nothin’, unless it wuz seein’ so much. You run along. I don’t want a thing but the bed.”

“I’ll tell her when she comes back. I must lie down now and decompose myself. I’m too flustrated to talk to anybody. I believe I am agoin’ to cry. Hain’t it dreadful? I feel worse than I did that time I sneezed backwards. I never had anything to disinfect me like this has in all my born days. Where are them pesky beds? I thought they wuz in the wall jest anywheres and I’ve walked around this room three times and haint found ’em yet. Jest as well write my last will and testaments while I am waitin’ for Semarthy, for I know I’ve ketched my death-of-cold wearin’ this skirt.”

“There she is at last, I’ll jest have to cry.”

“For goodness sakes! what’s the matter?”

“Oh! Scmarthy, there hain’t no Miss Brown. No! she’s not dead. She jest never wuz.”

“Well, for pity sake, hush blubbering about it,”

“But Scmarthy Jane Scovendikes, think about all them nice soldier boys, that I thought wuz Miss Brown’s. They hain’t got no mother, and NEVER DID HAVE.”



